

Garbage Gazette

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Commercial Organics Collection Pilot Begins

On August 4, 2003, the towns of Groton and Stonington began collecting source separated organic materials from participating commercial establishments. Funded in part by a DEP grant, the goal is to recycle food waste and waxed corrugated cardboard from commercial generators such as grocery stores, restaurants, and conference centers.



Both Groton and Stonington are unique in that they have mandatory volume-based user fees for commercial waste generators. The towns go out to bid and contract for waste removal, then bill the businesses according to how much waste they generate. Recycling is provided at a lesser cost. Therefore, it is in the Town's best interest to provide as many recycling opportunities as possible to help reduce individual costs for waste disposal...hence, this pilot.



So far, twelve businesses have signed-up for the voluntary pilot, and more will be added as interest grows. Businesses are provided with free 64 or 32 gallon wheeled totes, signage, training, and a participation sticker for their window. During the pilot, removal costs will be zero. F.E. Crandall is doing the collection that currently occurs three days per week, but may be modified as data is collected and analyzed. Totes are emptied, rinsed on-site, and returned with a small amount of wood

chips in the bottom. The wood chips help absorb liquids and keeps food from sticking to the bottom of the cart.

The carts are being weighed and the contents observed at every collection. This will help establish how many carts particular businesses will need, identify where more training is needed, estimate diversion rates, track trends in participation, and determine cost effectiveness. Preliminary data from the first two weeks of collection shows that an average collection day yields about 1.8 tons of organics. This will obviously vary with the seasons and as more businesses are added.

Once the collection route is completed, the food and waxed cardboard are taken to Earth Care Farm in Charlestown, Rhode Island. It is the closest facility that accepts pre and post consumer food waste. The owner of this farm, which grows organic food and is a licensed food waste compost facility, is very particular about the quality of organics he accepts for recycling because he sells a high-end compost product. Therefore, it is very important that there are no physical contaminants with the food waste that would render the resultant compost unmarketable. Inorganic items such as individual serve condiment wrappers and plastic butter pats, twist-ties, rubber bands, plastic wrap, plastic straws, rubber gloves, etc, are not allowed in the organics container. Reduced tipping fees are charged for "clean" loads; however, persistent poor quality loads could cause the farm to stop accepting the pilot's organics. With no alternative site



available, this could effectively shut down the pilot. Eliminating contamination will be one of the biggest challenges of the pilot.

It is much too early in this pilot to draw any conclusions as to the success of the program. The learning curve is steep, especially for businesses with high employee turnover rates due to the seasonal tourist trade. And, it will take time to recruit more businesses and analyze the economics. There is no doubt that tweaking will be needed, but if successful, this program will benefit everyone involved...including the environment.

For more information and photos, please visit the DEP website at <http://www.dep.state.ct.us/wst/compost/grotonpilot.htm>

State Prizes for Connecticut Recycles Day

In addition to the FORD Focus PZEV being offered as a national prize, Connecticut residents who fill out a promise card or make a pledge on the internet at www.americarecyclesday.org will also be entered into a random drawing for the following prizes:

Adult Prizes	Youth Prizes (under 18)
5 XL recycled fleece vests Donated by Tetra Pak	Computer Donated by JC Penney Catalogue Fulfillment Center
\$50 Gift Certificate Donated by "It's Only Natural Restaurant"	\$500 of lamp recycling services Donated by Northeast Lamp
Compost Bin and Rain Saver Donated by Signature Marketing	Recycled plastic bench Donated by O'Brien & Sons
A year's supply of ice cream (2 half-gallons per month) Donated by HP HOOD	\$150 for environmental library books Donated by Waste Management
Dinner for two at Mohegan Sun Seasons Buffet Donated by Mohegan Sun	

Additional prizes may be available at the time of the drawing. Visit www.dep.state.ct.us/wst/recycle/ctrecycles.htm and select the "America Recycles Day" button to get the most updated list. The Connecticut Recycles Day Steering Committee is most appreciative of the generosity of our donors, many of whom have continued to support this event throughout its' 7-year history. Please note that nationally 5 TREK bikes will be awarded as Youth prizes. All Connecticut Youth prizes will be awarded to the school of the winner. If a winning youth is not yet attending school, or is home-schooled, the winner must designate a local school to receive the prize. Youth prizes cannot be awarded to a private home. Only Connecticut residents are eligible to receive Connecticut prizes.

The National Steering Committee will be making a supply of new posters and bookmarks available to all states that participate in America Recycles Day. The posters are 11" X 17" in size and feature the colorful "recycle guys" from South Carolina and fun facts about recycling. The posters will be available in early September and the bookmarks will be available later in the month. To reserve a supply of either item for your event, please contact Meg Enkler at (860) 424-3238.

Municipal Recycling Reports are Due

August 31st is the deadline to submit your annual municipal recycling report to the CT DEP Recycling Office. Congratulations to those towns who have already submitted reports. Special thanks to the town of Portland for being the first municipality to submit their report. If you have any questions about your reporting form, please contact Judy Belaval at (860) 424-3237.

Green School Contest Forms Available On-line

October 24th is the last day for schools with outstanding recycling programs to submit their entry forms to win both recognition for their program and an ice cream party, sponsored by HP HOOD, for all students and staff. Visit www.dep.state.ct.us/wst/recycle/ctrecycles.htm to get an entry form.